



MEETING MINUTES

Golden Valley Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Task Force

Meeting #2 – October 3, 2016

Present:

Council Member: Steve Schmidgall

Staff: Emily Goellner, Chloe McGuire Brigl, Marc Nevinski, Jeff Oliver, Jason Zimmerman, Eric Eckman, and traffic consultant Mike Kotila

Task Force Members: Billy Binder, Kelly Grissman, Dawn Hill, Hubert Humphrey III, Robert Mattison, Paula Pentel, Dawn Peterson, Laura Pugh, Wendy Rubinyi

1. Call to Order

Zimmerman called the meeting to order at 6 pm.

2. Approval of Minutes

The Task Force reviewed the meeting minutes from August 1, 2016. No changes were suggested.

MOTION: Motion to approve the minutes as submitted approved 9-0.

3. Group Discussion: Goals and Community Input

Goellner presented information on the timeline for this planning process and reminded the Task Force that the final deliverable will be a set of recommendations that will be incorporated into the 2040 Comprehensive Plan upon approval by the Planning Commission and City Council in 2017. Goellner summarized the results of the group exercise at Meeting #1, which focused on goals for the bicycle and pedestrian network. Zimmerman asked the Task Force for their feedback on the goals staff drafted based on the previous Task Force meeting, the City Survey, and the Comprehensive Plan Kickoff Open House. Zimmerman noted that themes emerged from this input – improving the safety of major intersections, Highway 55 as a barrier to better connectivity, and the desire of community members to reach key destinations by bicycle or walking.

Pentel asked if those surveyed in the Community Survey are representative of the Golden Valley population. Staff members noted that is the goal, but did not have information at this time. They noted that all of the Community Survey results would be shared at a later date. Pentel stated that there was jargon in the Community Survey. Zimmerman said that it is important that the Comprehensive Plan and other City publications include definitions of the different types of bicycle facilities. Humphrey III said that the light rail will cause an increase in demand for bicycle and pedestrian facilities near the stations, particularly on Golden Valley Road. Rubinyi noted that we must plan for our future. To attract younger families to this community, the City must offer bicycle and pedestrian connections and a robust housing stock. Mattison stated that most people work too far from home to commute by walking or biking and that most people likely want sidewalks for recreation, not commuting. He noted that we must look at how people want to live rather than how they ought to live. Grissman noted that once additional bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is built, more people will start using it. Pentel added that the policy on whether bicycles should be permitted on sidewalks will need to be addressed in the future as more infrastructure is built.

Binder said that on-street bicycle lanes are a win-win solution to improve the network because they are separate from sidewalks. Mattison clarified that he supports on-street bicycle lanes, but doesn't want to use the whole budget for bicycle and pedestrian facilities on projects only like the Luce Line. Humphrey III reiterated that there must be a clear separation between the various modes of transportation because many bicyclists and drivers in vehicles aren't yet comfortable sharing the road. While separation using cones doesn't look great, it adds comfort. He added that the enforcement of speed limits and other similar regulations would help improve safety and comfort as well. Pentel noted that Chicago has cycle tracks, which are separated from traffic with some type of physical barrier. People of all ages use the facilities in a busy commercial area. Peterson added that she has seen families biking on Winnetka since bike lanes were added this summer and that this was an area where families rarely biked before. Binder noted that Hennepin County added stencils to a portion of Winnetka Avenue to communicate that there are bike lanes, but the stencils and additional signage were not yet completed. He noted that these improvements can help increase comfort and safety for on-street bicyclists.

The Task Force noted that north/south connections should be more prominent because it was noted at the previous Task Force meeting and by the public at the Comprehensive Plan Kickoff Open House. The Task Force also noted that north/south connections could be an objective under either goal, and that "access across major thoroughfares" should be included in the objectives.

Schmidgall stated that the two major goals were well crafted, and that fewer goals will help the Task Force keep focused. When asked how many goals are typical for a comprehensive plan chapter, Goellner stated that few chapters have more than six goals. Most chapters have six, so the Task Force should try to fit in that framework. Goellner stated that our implementation schedule will be particularly important to help prioritize routes. Schmidgall stated that he would like to see maps and drawings from the Task Force meetings included in a report.

Hill noted that the second goal, "Maximize safety, comfort, and convenience for all ages and abilities" requires more of a bicycle and pedestrian focus, since it will be in the context of the larger transportation chapter. The Task Force discussed moving the north/south routes to an objective under this goal, including creating safe thoroughfares, especially across Highway 55.

Grissman added that Objective #1 "Improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists at intersections" should be updated to read "Identify and remove safety barriers for pedestrians and bicyclists." Grissman continued that an inventory of barriers, such as Highway 55 or a difficult intersection, is a logical place to start. Rubinyi noted that Duluth Street should be included as a difficult intersection. Pugh suggested an additional objective under the second goal to educate citizens on how to use the system. She noted that clear policies and education of both bicyclists, pedestrians, and drivers seem to be missing in the goals and objectives. This objective would include not only signage, but information in the newsletter about safe biking on sidewalks, etc. Pentel noted that the City seems to be hesitant to install signage such as flashing yield signs, but that they could be very helpful.

Grissman asked about best practices for roadway design, and Oliver responded that the City uses County and MnDOT guidelines. The Task Force discussed the Douglas Drive plan and asked if the plan would

continue to be updated with best practices. Oliver explained that the facilities will fulfill the need and that it will be used tremendously. There will be striped, dedicated bicycle lanes and asphalt trails.

Humphrey III asked about snow and ice removal on Douglas Drive dedicated bicycle lanes and trails across the City. Oliver responded that the City sets priority areas for snow and ice removal during snow events, and that clearing sidewalks and trails is a priority for the City. The Task Force noted that clearing sidewalks may become an issue in the future, since Golden Valley is one of the only cities that still clears residents' sidewalks.

The Task Force discussed bicycle and pedestrian plans that other organizations have planned through Golden Valley including Hennepin County in conjunction with the proposed Blue Line Extension, Three Rivers Park District regional trails, and the Humphrey Student Capstone. Staff explained the current planning efforts around the Blue Line Extension stops in Golden Valley, including a new trailhead at the Golden Valley Road station, and connecting through Theodore Wirth Park. Humphrey III noted how important it is to have access on Golden Valley Road to connect downtown to the Golden Valley Road station. Oliver described that the County has applied for funding to reconstruct Golden Valley Road to make it usable for everybody. The Task Force noted the importance of safe crossings on major intersections and taking advantage of opportunities as they arise, as it is easier to implement changes during reconstruction projects.

The Task Force also noted the importance of destinations and network connections in creating new bicycle lanes and trails; Pugh suggested that the Task Force identify their own destinations, as well as the destinations of others they know, since all have different priorities and some may be outside the city limits.

The Task Force asked about the Theodore Wirth Parkway and Golden Valley Road intersection. Staff noted that it will be a signalized intersection and a trailhead. The Task Force also asked about the Canadian Pacific Regional Trail, and staff noted that there are large barriers to achieving this trail, although nothing is impossible. Grissman noted that the whole corridor is tough, but that some portions of it are more possible than others.

4. Group Exercise: Network Connections

The Task Force split into two groups to discuss the routes they feel need to be added across Golden Valley. Staff noted that the groups should not only draw the routes they would like to see in the City, but write why they chose the routes, and if they help make any connections across the City or to specific destinations. The first group consisted of Goellner, Binder, Humphrey III, Pentel, Pugh, Rubinyi, and Mattison. The second group was Schmidgall, Hill, Grissman, Zimmerman, Eckman, and Peterson.

The groups prioritized routes, key destinations, and key network connections across the City of Golden Valley. The first group noted difficult intersections, the importance of connecting the new Brookview Community Center, and having north/south and east/west trails across the City. The prioritized routes from this group were:

- The Highway 100 and Duluth Street intersection
- The Theodore Wirth Parkway and Golden Valley Road intersection
- Crossing Highway 55
- Pennsylvania Avenue (as an alternative to Winnetka for more casual riders)

- Rhode Island Drive
- 169 and Luce Line intersection
- Connecting the Blue Line to bicycles and pedestrians

They also noted that downtown, Brookview, the West End, and schools should have connections for bicycles and pedestrians and that the Task Force should leverage existing road reconstruction projects.

The second group prioritized:

- Glenwood Avenue (east/west connection)
- Connecting downtown and the LRT stops along Golden Valley Road (east/west connection)
- Golden Valley Road LRT to Duluth Street (east/west through Honeywell)
- A north/south connection east of Highway 100 (to Sochacki Park)
- A north/south connection along Highway 100 on Lilac Drive

As a group, the Task Force discussed the importance of connecting neighborhoods with recreation areas, such as little league fields, parks, and the Brookview Community Center, as well as targeting trails and paths for children and families. Humphrey III noted that the idea of connecting parks and having trails for families is very important since there are relatively few bicycle commuters in Golden Valley.

5. Involvement Opportunities

Zimmerman restated the purpose of the Task Force, to create a bicycle and pedestrian plan to be implemented into the Comprehensive Plan. Zimmerman further noted opportunities for Task Force members to become more involved in bicycle and pedestrian events across the Twin Cities, including seminars, workshops, and events with the Roadway Safety Institute, Transit for Livable Communities, Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition, Open Streets, and the Bike Alliance of Minnesota. Binder noted an opportunity to advocate for protected bicycle lanes in Minneapolis during the Glenwood Avenue reconstruction.

6. Adjournment

Moved by Schmidgall and seconded to adjourn at 8:03 pm. Motion carried unanimously.